

Figure 1

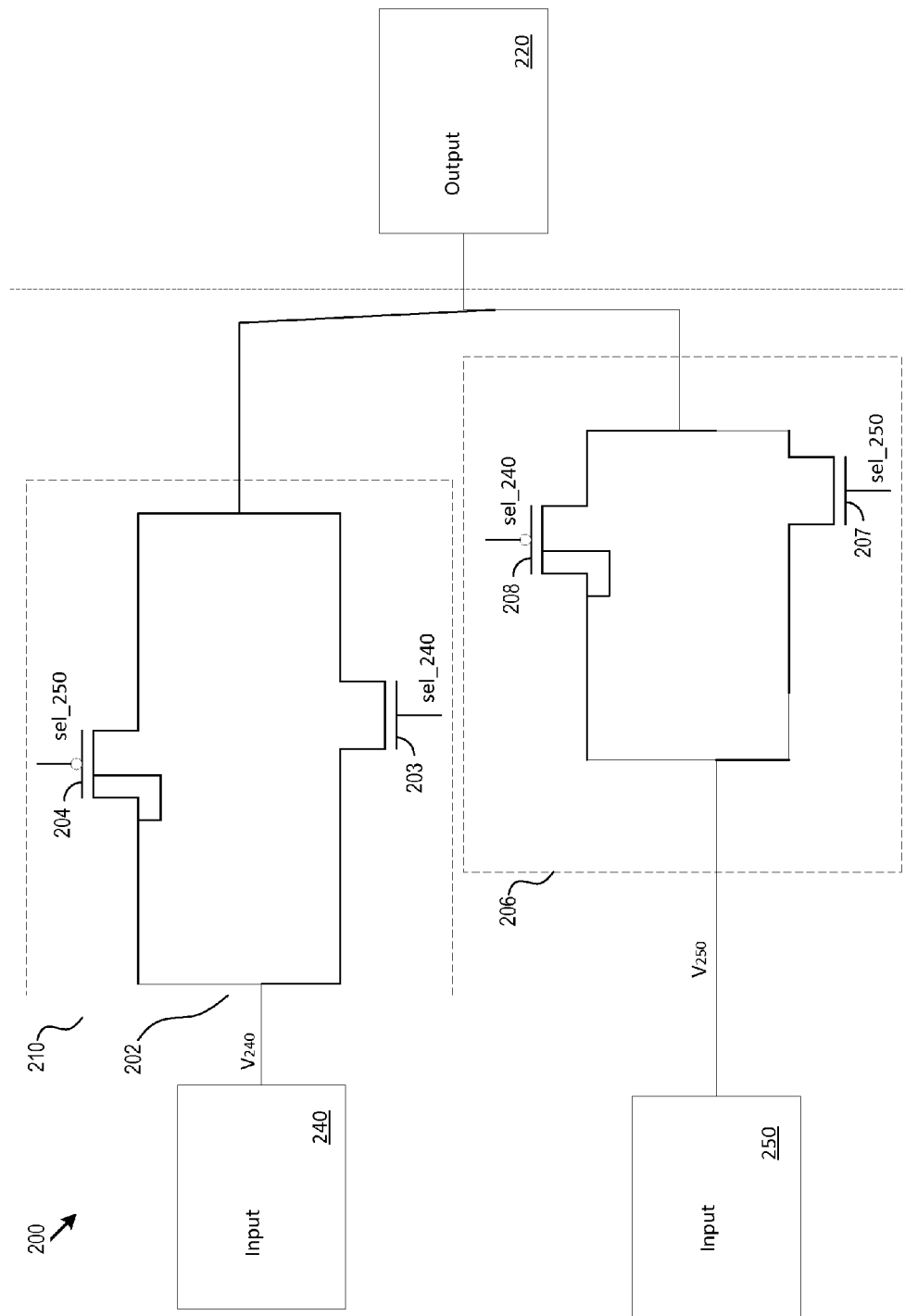


Figure 2

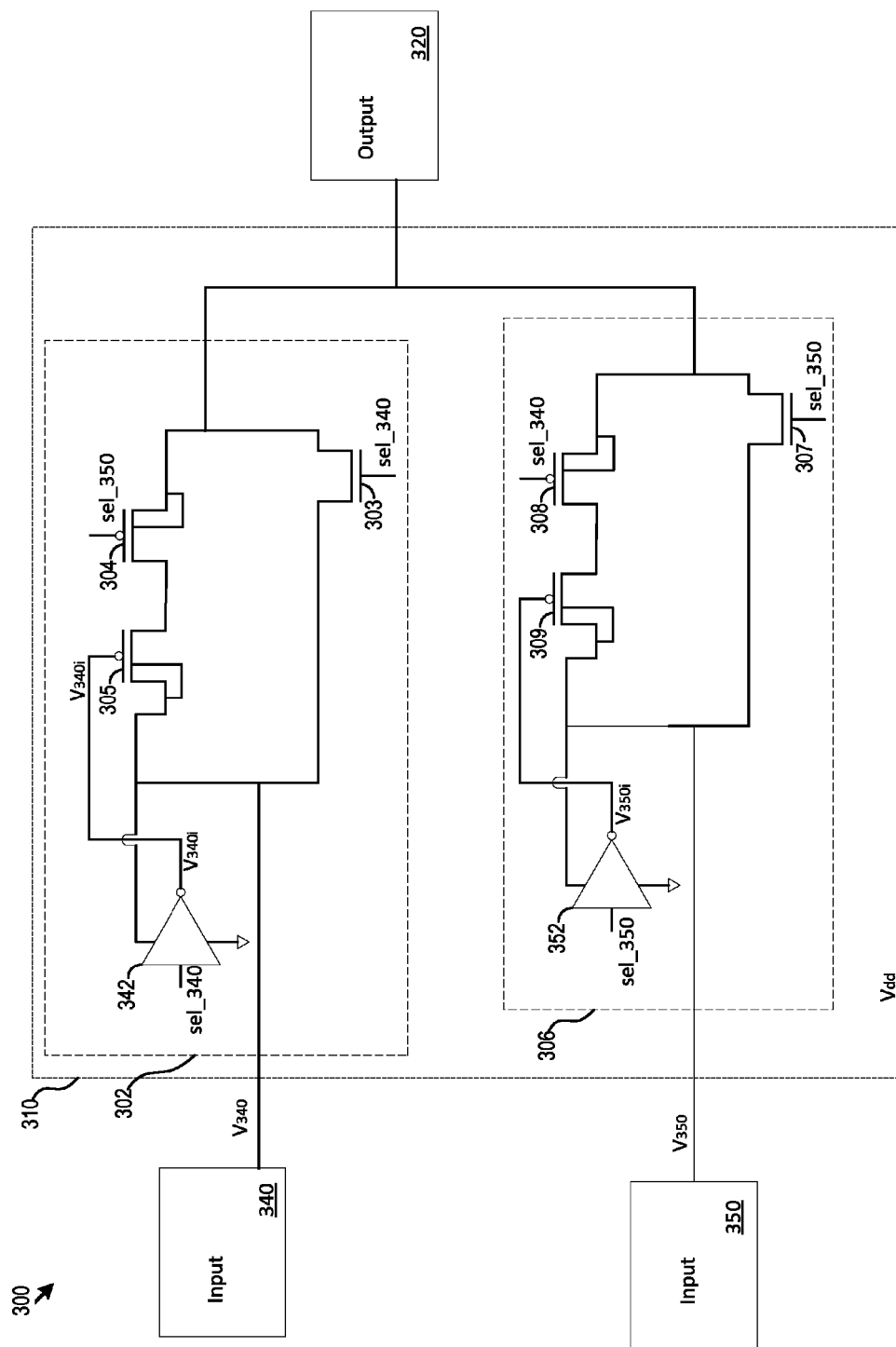


Figure 3

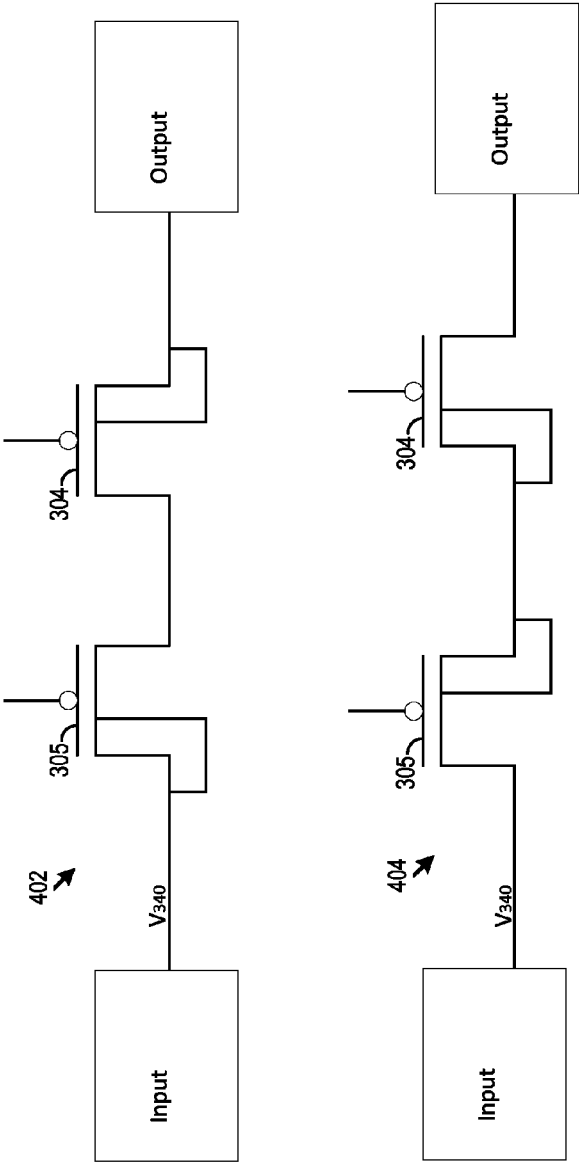


Figure 4

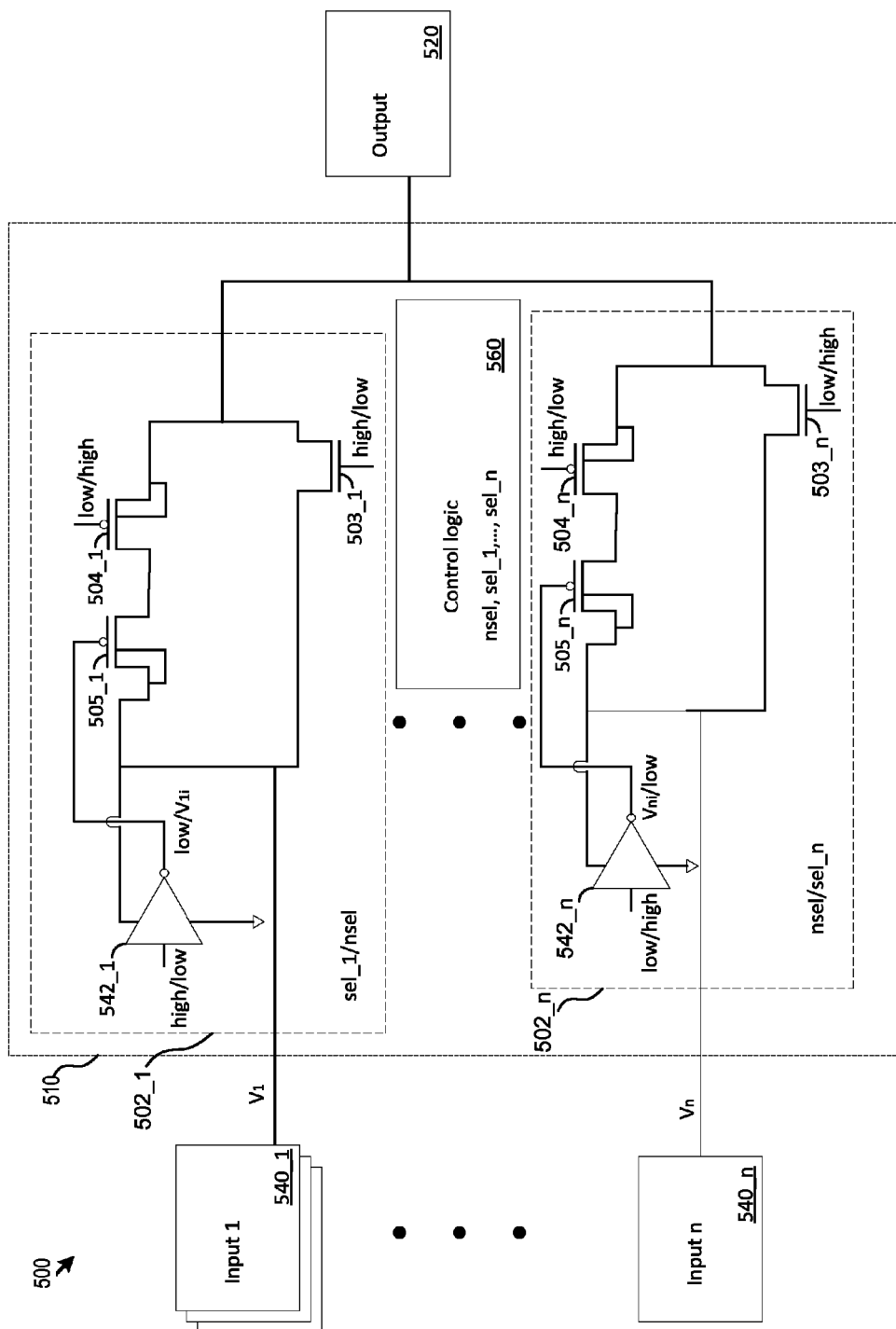


Figure 5

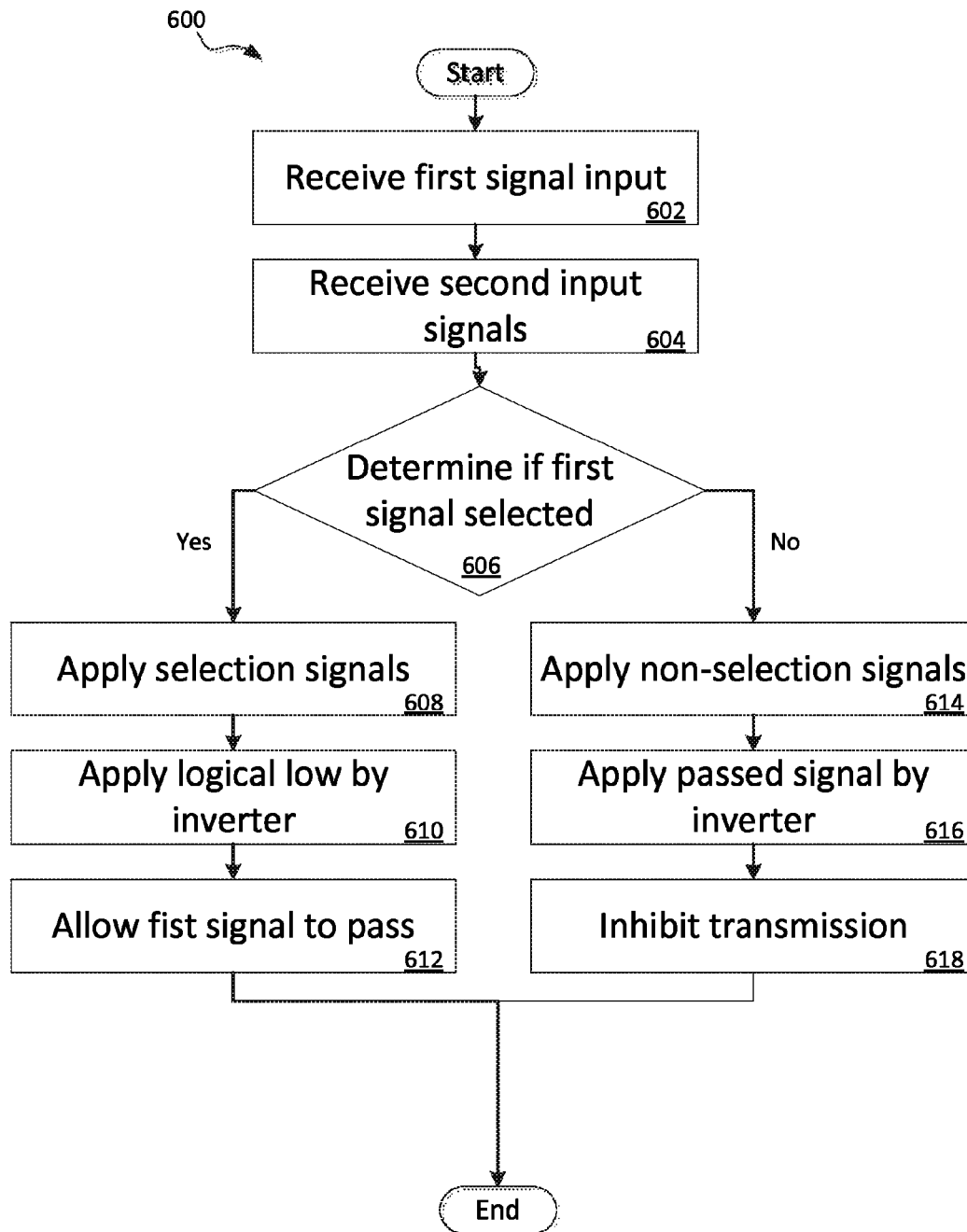


Figure 6

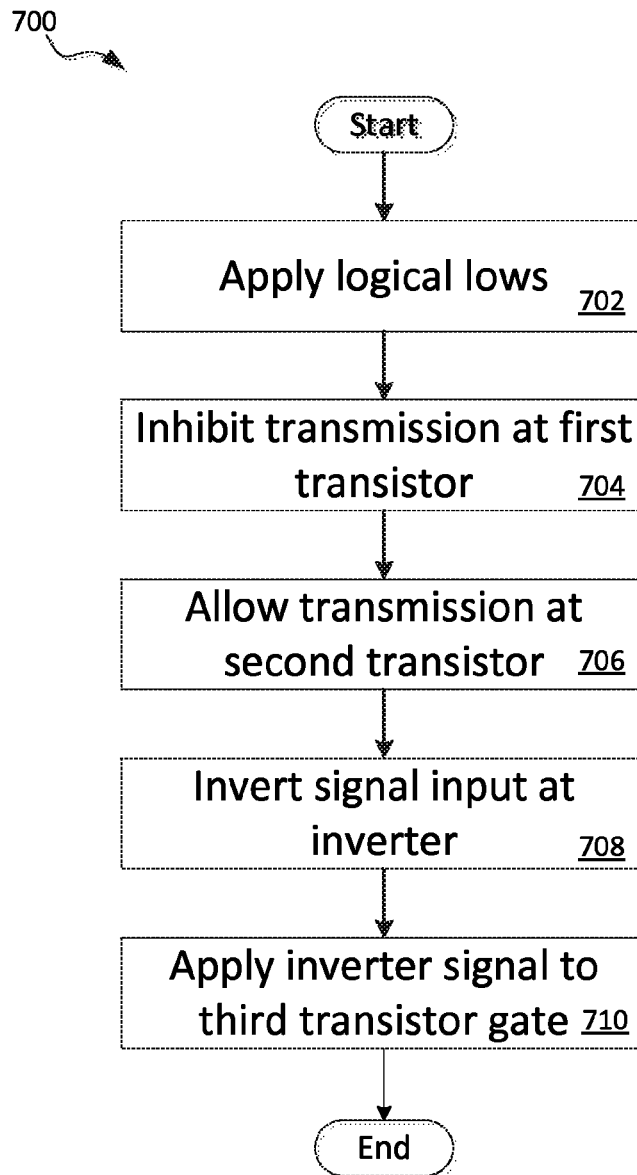


Figure 7

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MULTIPLEXING FOR SYSTEMS WITH MULTIPLE SUPPLY SOURCES

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/856,885, filed Jul. 22, 2013, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This disclosure relates generally to signal multiplexing systems and methods. It also relates to a multiplexing in systems with multiple supply sources.

BACKGROUND

A multiplexer receives multiple input signals and directs the input signals to a single output. Multiplexers may accept various input signals with differing characteristics. The multiplexer may apply switching or signal combination techniques to provide output access to multiple input signals. For example, inputs may be given access to the output for limited period in a time domain multiplexing scheme. Similarly, frequency or code based schemes may be used.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The innovation may be better understood with reference to the following drawings and description. In the figures, like reference numerals can designate corresponding parts throughout the different views.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an example multiplexer environment.

FIG. 2 is a circuit diagram of an example multiplexer system.

FIG. 3 is a circuit diagram of an example multiplexer system.

FIG. 4 is a circuit diagram showing example orientations of the transistors

FIG. 5 is a circuit diagram of another example multiplexer system.

FIG. 6 is a logical-flow diagram showing example logic for restricting reverse current flow.

FIG. 7 is a logical flow diagram of an example method of inhibiting current flow.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A multiplexer may operate to manage access to an output for a number of input sources. For example a multiplexer may receive inputs from several sensors sharing a single set of processing elements (e.g. analog-to-digital converters (ADCs), global positioning system (GPS) chips, digital signal processors (DSPs), processors, and/or other processing elements. The multiplexer may prevent unwanted current flow between signal sources through the multiplexer.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an example multiplexer environment. In this multiplexer environment **100**, input circuits **102_1**, **102_2** (e.g. sensors, etc.) on device **110** generates signals based on one or more conditions. The control logic **104** directs the multiplexer **106** to open a pathway the processing element **108** for the signal from input circuit **102_1**. A pathway from the input circuit **102_2** to output **108** is closed. In one example, the device is a communication device, such as a cell phone, smartphone, tablet, laptop, or a portable gaming system. However, the device may be virtually any

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device implementing one or more multiplexers. For example, cable or satellite television set-top boxes (STBs), GPS devices, or modems may use such multiplexers.

The device **110** may include transceiver elements **122** to support RF communication, one or more processors **124** to support execution of applications and general operation of the device. The applications may use signals from the input circuits in their operation. The device may include memory **126** for execution support and storage of system instructions **128** and operation parameters **132**. Signal processing hardware **134** (e.g. ADCs, baseband processors etc.) may also be included to accept outputs from the multiplexer **106** and/or to support decoding/encoding RF signaling. The communication device may include a user interface **136**, for example a display and graphical user interface, to allow for user operation of the device.

FIG. 2 is a circuit diagram of an example multiplexer system. The multiplexer system **200** includes a multiplexer **210** which accepts inputs from multiple signal sources (**240**, **250**) and manages the sources' pathway to output element **220**. The signal source **240** may produce a signal V_{240} which serves as the input to multiplexer element **202**. Signal source **250** may produce a signal V_{250} which serves as the input to multiplexer element **206**. The multiplexer elements are controlled via selection signals **sel_240** and **sel_250**.

The multiplexer element **202** includes transistors **203** and **204**. The multiplexer element **206** includes transistors **207** and **208**. Transistors **203** and **207** are negative metal oxide semiconductor (nMOS) and transistors **204** and **208** are positive metal oxide semiconductor (pMOS). Additionally or alternatively, other types of transistors can be used. The parallel configuration of nMOS and pMOS transistors may allow multiplexer elements **202** and **206** to act as a normal wire when both the nMOS and pMOS transistors are "ON" (allowing current to flow). The transistors **203** and **208** accept **sel_240** as a gate input. The transistors **204** and **207** accept **sel_250** as a gate input. The signals **sel_240** and **sel_250** may be derived from multiplexer supply signal V_s . In one case, **sel_240** may switch between values of V_s (or zero) and **sel_250** may take on values of zero (or V_s). Thus, when **sel_240** is high **sel_250** may be low and when **sel_240** is low **sel_250** may be high. When **sel_240** is high, multiplexer element **240** allows current to flow. When **sel_250** is high, multiplexer element **250** allows current to flow. If V_s is set to a small magnitude value (e.g. zero or near zero, etc.), both **sel_240** and **sel_250** may be low. In some cases, this may correspond to turning off the multiplexer system or placing the system in a power save mode (or other low power mode). When V_s is set to such a small magnitude value, V_{240} and V_{250} may have relatively large magnitudes. In some cases, the values of V_{240} and V_{250} may be allowed to float while V_s is set to a small magnitude value.

In the multiplexer system **200** if V_{240} is greater than V_s and V_{250} , current may flow from signal source **240** to signal source **250** through multiplexer **210**. Similarly, if V_{250} is greater than V_s and V_{240} current may flow in the opposite direction. For floating values of V_{240} and V_{250} and small magnitude values of V_s , current may flow in either direction as V_{240} and V_{250} float among different values. In some cases, these current flows may cause undesirable operation. Thus, it may be advantageous to implement a system which prevents current flow between signal sources through the multiplexer for various signal level combinations.

In addition, pMOS transistors **204** and **208** may have multiple paths for current flow. One path is the channel controlled by the gate input. The second path is a parasitic path across the substrate of the transistor itself. The parasitic path is not

controlled by the gate. The parasitic path may only allow unidirectional flow, and may be dependent on the design of the transistor. The parasitic current flow may lead to undesirable operation. Thus, it may be advantageous to implement a system which prevents the parasitic current flow.

FIG. 3 is a circuit diagram of an example multiplexer system. In various implementations, the multiplexer 310 may be configured to prevent current flow between the input circuits (340, 350) connected to the output element 320 via the multiplexer for various input and supply voltage combinations. In some cases, such current flows are inhibited for zero or low supply voltage values (relative to one or more input signal values).

The multiplexer system 300 includes a multiplexer element 310 which accepts inputs from multiple signal sources (340, 350) and manages the sources' pathway to output element 320. The signal source 340 may produce a signal V_{340} which serves as the input to multiplexer element 302. Signal source 350 may produce a signal V_{350} which serves as the input to multiplexer element 306. The multiplexer elements are controlled via selection signals sel_340 and sel_350 . The multiplexer element 302 includes transistors 303, 304, and 305 and inverter 342. The multiplexer element 306 includes transistors 307, 308, and 309 and inverter 352. Transistors 303 and 308 and inverter 342 accept sel_340 as a gate input. Inverter 342 accepts sel_340 as a first input and V_{340} as a second input. Transistor 305 accepts the output of inverter 342 as a gate input. The transistors 304 and 307 accept sel_350 as a gate input. Inverter 352 accepts sel_350 as a first input and V_{350} as a second input. Transistor 309 accepts the output of inverter 352 as a gate input.

The signals sel_340 and sel_350 may be derived from supply signal V_{dd} (e.g. a supply voltage for the multiplexer system). In some cases, sel_340 may switch between values of V_{dd} (or zero) and sel_350 may take on values of zero (or V_{dd}). When sel_340 is low, inverter 342 passes signal V_{340} and provides it ($V_{340i}=V_{340}$) as a gate input to transistor 305. Thus, the signal (V_{340i}) used to gate V_{340} may be proportional to V_{340} . Transistor 305 may be effective in inhibiting current flow for low magnitude values of V_{dd} and/or high magnitude values of V_{340} (When $V_{340}>V_{350}$). When sel_340 is high, the output of inverter 342 may be low regardless of the value of V_{340} . For example, a minimum signal level for inverter 342 may be passed (e.g. a ground, etc.) Similarly, when sel_350 is low, inverter 352 passes signal V_{350} and provides it ($V_{350i}=V_{350}$) as a gate input to transistor 309. The signal (V_{350i}) used to gate V_{350} may be proportional to V_{350} . Transistor 309 may be effective in inhibiting current flow for low magnitude values of V_{dd} and/or high magnitude values of V_{350} (e.g. when $V_{340}>V_{350}$). When sel_350 is high, the output of inverter 352 may be low regardless of the value of V_{350} .

In various implementations, transistors 304, 305, 308, and 309 may be pMOS and transistors 303 and 307 may be nMOS. pMOS transistors 304, 305, 308, and 309 may allow a gated current flow pathway and a parasitic current flow pathway. In some implementations, transistors 304 and 305 may be connected in series. Further, transistor 305 may be situated such that it forms a mirror image of transistor 304 structurally. Thus, any parasitic flow possible in transistor 304 is opposite in direction to any possible parasitic flow in transistor 305. In some cases this may prevent parasitic flow across both transistors 304 and 305. The use of gates, inverter 342 and inverter 352, and supplied by voltages V_{340} and V_{350} ensure that the transistors 305 and 309 are non-conductive when V_{dd} is lower than V_{340} and/or V_{350} . The use of transistor 304 in series with transistor 305, and transistor 308 in series with transistor 309 prevents unwanted current to flow through

the substrates of transistors 304, 305, 308 and 309. In some cases the signals (e.g. V_{dd} , V_{340} , and V_{350}) may include negative values. In some implementations, transistors 304, 305, 308, and 309 may be nMOS and transistors 303 and 307 may be pMOS. nMOS transistors 304, 305, 308, and 309 may allow a gated current flow pathway and a parasitic current flow pathway. Mirror image structures may be implemented to inhibit the parasitic current flow pathways.

FIG. 4 is a circuit diagram showing example orientations (402, 404) of the transistors. The transistors may be placed in either structural orientation with respect to signals V_{340} and the output element when in this mirrored orientation with respect to each other (e.g. the transistors may be flipped). Transistors 308 and 309 may be situated in similar orientations.

FIG. 5 is a circuit diagram of another example multiplexer system. The multiplexer system 500 may include an arbitrary number of input circuits (540_1, ..., 540_n). Transmission of input signals (V_1, \dots, V_n) to the output element 520 is managed by corresponding multiplexer elements (502_1, ..., 502_n). The multiplexer elements include inverters (542_1, ..., 542_n), and transistors (503_1, ..., 503_n; 504_1, ..., 504_n; 505_1, ..., 505_n). In various implementations, transistors (503_1, ..., 503_n) allow transmission in response to a logical high at their gate and inhibit transmission in response to a logical low at their gate; transistors (504_1, ..., 504_n; 505_1, ..., 505_n) allow transmission in response to a logical low at their gate and inhibit transmission in response to a logical high at their gate. Further, inverters (542_1, ..., 542_n) output a logical low in response to a logical high control signal and output an inverted input in response to a logical low control signal. When an input signal is selected for transmission to the output element by control logic 560, an associated selection signal (sel_1, \dots, sel_n) is applied by the control logic to the multiplexer system. The application of the selection signal may cause logical highs and lows to be applied to the proper transistors to allow transmission. For example, application of sel_1 may cause a logical high to be applied to inverter 542_1 and transistor 503_1 and a logical low to be applied to transistor 504_1. In some implementations, sel_1 may itself include the proper logical highs and lows. Other multiplexer elements may have a non-selection signal ($n sel$) applied. Similarly, the non-selection signal may cause the proper signals for transmission inhibition to be applied in response to its application or the non-selection signal may include the application of the proper signals for transmission inhibition.

FIG. 6 is a logical-flow diagram showing example logic for restricting current flow. A first input signal is received at a multiplexer element (e.g. 340, 540_1) from a first input circuit (602). One or more second input signals are received at one or more multiplexer elements (e.g. 350, 540_2, ..., 540_n) from one or more second input signals (604). The logic 600 may determine if the first input signal may be selected for transmission to an output element (606).

If the logic 600 determines that the first signal is selected one or more selection signals associated with the first input circuit are applied by the multiplexer system (608). The multiplexer system may apply a logical high to an inverter (e.g. 342, 542_1) and the gate of a first transistor (e.g. 303, 503_1) of a first multiplexer element, and may apply a logical low to the gate of a second transistor (e.g. 304, 504_1) of the first multiplexer element. The selection signals may include the applied logical highs and lows or the logical highs and lows may be applied in response to the selection signals. In response to the logical high applied to the inverter a logical low (e.g. a minimum output value for the inverter) is applied

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to third transistor (e.g. **305**, **505_1**) at its gate (**610**). The first transistor may allow current flow in response to a logical high, and inhibit current flow in response to a logical low. The second and third transistors may allow current flow in response to a logical low, and inhibit current flow in response to a logical high. Thus in response to the applied logical highs and lows, the three transistors allow the first signal to pass to the output element (**612**).

If the logic **600** determines that the first signal is not selected, one or more non-selection signals associated with the first input circuit are applied by the multiplexer system (**614**). The multiplexer system may apply a logical low to the inverter and the gate of the first transistor, and may apply a logical high to the gate of the second transistor. The non-selection signals may include the applied logical highs and lows or the logical highs and lows may be applied in response to the non-selection signals. In response to the logical low applied to the inverter, the inverter passes the first signal to the gate of the third transistor (**616**). In response to the logical low and logical high, the first and second transistors inhibit transmission from the first circuit to the output element (**618**). If the first signal has a sufficient magnitude, the passed first signal may correspond to a logical high and the third transistor may inhibit transmission. If the first signal lacks sufficient magnitude, the passed signal may correspond to a logical low and transmission may be allowed by the third transistor. However, no appreciable signal may be present to transmit. Further, transmission may still be blocked by the second transistor.

FIG. 7 is a logical flow diagram of an example method of inhibiting current flow. If a multiplexer system is off or in a low power mode, the logic (e.g. **560**, **600**) may be unavailable for management of the system. The input circuits to the multiplexer system may remain active. In some implementations, the method **700** may be used to prevent improper current flows among the input circuits. Logical lows may be applied to the inverter (e.g. **342**, **352**, **542_1**, . . . , **542_n**), the first transistor (e.g. **303**, **306**, **503_1**, . . . , **503_n**), and the second transistor (e.g. **304**, **308**, **504_1**, . . . , **504_n**) of a multiplexer element (e.g. **302**, **306**, **502_1**, . . . , **502_n**) (**702**). A first input circuit may provide a signal to the multiplexer element. This may be consistent with a low power mode (or non-operation of the multiplexer system) and active input circuits. The first transistor may inhibit transmission of signals in response to the logical low (**704**). The second transistor allows transmission in response to the logical low (**706**). In response to the logical low, the inverter passes the input signal (**708**) and provides the signal to the gate of the third transistor (e.g. **305**, **309**, **505_1**, . . . , **505_n**) (**710**). If the input signal has sufficient magnitude, the signal may act as a logical high. In this case, the third transistor inhibits transmission. If the input signal does not have sufficient magnitude, the signal may act as a logical low and transmission may not be inhibited by the third transistor. The low magnitude input signal may not cause appreciable current transfers.

The methods, devices, and logic described above may be implemented in many different ways in many different combinations of hardware, software or both hardware and software. For example, all or parts of the system may include circuitry in a controller, a microprocessor, or an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), or may be implemented with discrete logic or components, or a combination of other types of analog or digital circuitry, combined on a single integrated circuit or distributed among multiple integrated circuits. All or part of the logic described above may be implemented as instructions for execution by a processor, controller, or other processing device and may be stored in a

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tangible or non-transitory machine-readable or computer-readable medium such as flash memory, random access memory (RAM) or read only memory (ROM), erasable programmable read only memory (EPROM) or other machine-readable medium. Thus, a product, such as a computer program product, may include a storage medium and computer readable instructions stored on the medium, which when executed in an endpoint, computer system, or other device, cause the device to perform operations according to any of the description above.

The processing capability of the system may be distributed among multiple system components, such as among multiple processors and memories, optionally including multiple distributed processing systems. Parameters, databases, and other data structures may be separately stored and managed, may be incorporated into a single memory or database, may be logically and physically organized in many different ways, and may implemented in many ways, including data structures such as linked lists, hash tables, or implicit storage mechanisms. Programs may be parts (e.g., subroutines) of a single program, separate programs, distributed across several memories and processors, or implemented in many different ways, such as in a library, such as a shared library (e.g., a dynamic link library (DLL)). The DLL, for example, may store code that performs any of the system processing described above.

While various implementations have been described, many more embodiments and implementations are possible. Accordingly, the description is not to be restricted.

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

applying a first control signal to an inverter element;
applying a second control signal to a first transistor of a multiplexer; and
applying the first control signal to a third transistor;
in response to the second control signal, allowing signal flow across the first transistor;
in response to the first control signal:
passing a signal input to a gate of a second transistor of the multiplexer using the inverter; and
restricting signal flow across the third transistor; and
responsive to the signal input at the gate of the second transistor, restricting signal flow across the second transistor, the second transistor coupled to the first transistor in series, the third transistor coupled in parallel to the first and second transistors.

2. The method of claim 1 where the first and second transistors comprise positive metal oxide semiconductor (pMOS) transistors.

3. The method of claim 2 where the third transistor comprises a negative metal oxide semiconductor (nMOS) transistor.

4. The method of claim 1 where the first and second transistors are coupled in a mirrored configuration which restricts a parasitic current pathway.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second transistors and the inverter operate as a first gating circuit of multiple gating circuits; and

the method further comprises selectively applying the first and second control signals to ones of the multiple gating circuits to gate signal flow to a shared output.

6. The method of claim 5, where selectively applying the first and second control signals to ones of the multiple gating circuits comprises applying a selection signal to a second gating circuit of the multiple gate circuits; and

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in response to the selection signal, allowing signal flow across the second gating circuit.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising indicating a low power mode via the control signal.

8. The method of claim 1, where passing the signal input to the gate of the second transistor restricts signal flow across the second transistor.

9. A circuit comprising;

a first transistor;

a second transistor connected in series with the first transistor, the first and second transistors situated in a mirrored configuration;

a third transistor connected in parallel with the first and second transistors; and

an inverter to, in a first mode, pass an input from a source and provide the input to a gate of the first transistor; and responsive to the second transistor receiving a control signal, the third transistor and the second transistor configured to switch the circuit between the first mode in which transmission is allowed between the source and an output and a second mode in which transmission is restricted.

10. The circuit of claim 9 where the second mode comprises a low power mode of the circuit.

11. The circuit of claim 9 where in the first mode the inverter and the second transistor receive a logical high control signal.

12. The circuit of claim 9 where the second mode comprises an active mode of the circuit.

13. The circuit of claim 9 where the circuit comprises a component of a multiplexer system configured to manage transmission of multiple inputs to an output.

14. The circuit of claim 13 where the multiplexer system is configured to allow one input to transmit to the output at a time.

15. A device, comprising:

reverse current inhibition circuitry comprising:

a first transistor; and

a second transistor, the first and second transistors situated in series with one another;

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the reverse current inhibition circuitry configured to:

block reverse current flow towards a first signal source from a second signal source when in a low power mode; and

allow an input to flow from a source to an output when in an active mode;

a third transistor coupled in parallel to the reverse current inhibition circuitry, the third transistor configured to: switch between a low power mode and the active mode responsive to a selection signal different from the input, the selection signal configured to distinguish between the low power mode and the active mode; restrict current flow in the low power mode; and allow current flow in the active mode;

an inverter coupled to the reverse current inhibition circuitry, the inverter configured to: when the selection signal indicates the low power mode, pass the input to a gate of the first transistor to restrict signal flow across the first transistor; and when the selection signal indicates the active mode, allow signal flow across the first transistor; and control circuitry coupled to the inverter, the control circuitry configured to apply the selection signal to the inverter.

16. The device of claim 15 where the first and second transistors are coupled such that the second transistor forms a structural mirror of the first transistor.

17. The device of claim 15 where the inverter is configured to, in the active mode, provide the input to the gate of the first transistor without inversion.

18. The device of claim 15 where:

the control circuitry is configured to, in the low power mode, provide a logical low to a gate of the second transistor to restrict current flow across the second transistor.

19. The device of claim 15 where the first and second transistors comprise positive metal oxide semiconductor transistors.

20. The device of claim 19 where the first and second transistors are situated in parallel with a negative metal oxide semiconductor transistor.

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